

Message Text

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SUBJ: STUDENT ACTIVITY SINCE ANNOUNCEMENT OF WITHDRAWAL OF
POLICE FROM UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

REF: MADRID 8664

1. THE WATERSHED EVENT FOR SPANISH UNIVERSITIES, IN THE GENERAL POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION PROGRAM OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, WAS THE ANNOUNCEMENT 9 JAN BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, CARLOS ROBLES PIQUER THAT THE POLICE WOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE CAMPUSES AND THAT THE RECTORS AND DEANS WOULD BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER. THIS ANNOUNCEMENT FOLLOWED A MEETING OF 27 UNIVERSITY RECTORS WITH THE MINISTER WHICH DETERMINED THAT THE REGULATING OF STUDENT MEETINGS, STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE UNIVERSITIES AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS ON CAMPUSES WOULD DEVOLVE ON THE RECTORS.

2. ALTHOUGH THE POLICE INTERVENED ON THE CAMPUS OF MADRID UNIVERSITY (COMPLUTENSE) ON 12 JAN TO DISPERSE A SIZEABLE DEMONSTRATION OF STUDENTS PETITIONING AMNESTY, THEY WERE SOON WITHDRAWN AND THE FOLLOWING DAY THE RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY ANNOUNCED THAT IN THE FUTURE THE POLICE WOULD ENTER THE CAMPUS ONLY ON HIS REQUEST AND
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THEN ONLY IN CASES OF VIOLENCE. THE RECTOR RECOGNIZED

THAT THE PROBLEM HE FACES IS THAT GROUPS OF WORKERS (BELIEVED TO BE MAINLY FROM THE PCE-DOMINATED WORKERS' COMMISSION) HAVE BEGUN TO COME ON CAMPUS TO ORGANIZE MEETINGS IN SUPPORT OF THE VARIOUS STRIKES OCCURRING IN MADRID.

3. POLITICAL AGITATION HAS CONTINUED ON NEARLY ALL MAJOR SPANISH UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES BUT WITHOUT NOTICEABLE INCREASE. AT TIMES THE DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE MOVED OFF THE CAMPUSES AS IN A DEMONSTRATION BY MADRID STUDENTS 14 JAN ON A MAJOR STREET LEADING FROM THE CAMPUS; AT THAT TIME RAISED FISTS AND SHOUTS FOR THE "JOVEN GUARDIA ROJA" (YOUNG RED GUARD, THE YOUTH GROUP OF THE MAOIST PARTIDO DEL TRABAJO - PARTY OF LABOR) WERE IN EVIDENCE. RECENTLY A PROMINENT PROFESSOR FROM A PROVINCIAL UNIVERSITY STATED TO AN EMBOFF HIS BELIEF THAT THE SUPPORT LEFTIST GROUPS CAN GENERATE ON SPANISH CAMPUSES HAS BEEN DUE MORE TO STUDENT FRUSTRATION WITH LACK OF FACILITIES THAN TO ANY REAL IDEOLOGICAL BASIS. CERTAINLY, THOUGH THE MAJORITY OF DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE CENTERED ON THE ATTENTION-GETTING ISSUE OF AMNESTY, THERE HAVE BEEN NUMEROUS DEMONSTRATIONS AND MEETINGS CALLING FOR UNIVERSITY REFORM AND MODERNIZATION AND THE STUDENTS HAVE CONTINUED TO BOYCOTT STUDENT ELECTIONS (AS REPORTED IN REFTEL THE STUDENTS FEEL THESE ELECTIONS ARE UNIVERSITY-CONTROLLED AND NON-REPRESENTATIVE). "YA" (CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT) NOTED RECENTLY THE APPEARANCE ON THE COMPLUTENSE CAMPUS OF PROPAGANDA OF A NOTICEABLY MODERATE AND LIBERAL NATURE.

4. THUS FAR, THOUGH SOME STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE SPILLED OFF CAMPUSES, THERE HAVE BEEN NO VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE POLICE AND THE CALCULATED RISK TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL. THE EXPECTATIONS OF MANY PROFESSORS, HOWEVER, ESPECIALLY IN THE PROVINCIAL UNIVERSITIES WHERE STUDENTS DISCIPLINE IS LESS THAN IN MADRID, ARE GUARDED RATHER THAN OPTIMISTIC.
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